

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 077905
ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 NEA-10
MMO-04 EB-08 SS-15 SIG-03 PCH-04 PER-05 OMB-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01
ABF-01 IO-14 OES-07 DOE-15 SOE-02 TRSE-00 SP-02
AID-05 DODE-00 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PM-05 /177 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:JACOLLINGE:REB
APPROVED BY PA:HCARTERIII
M/MO/R
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
AF, ARA, EA, EB, EUR, NEA, OCT, S/P, PA/M REQUESTS 10 EXTRA COPIES
-----000089 252023Z /46

R 251939Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS
USIA
AMEMBASSY KIGALI BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY TOKYO BY POUCH
XMT AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS STATE 077905

FOR CONSULS, POL, ECON OFFICERS, ALSO PASS USIS, DOD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS SOPN

SUBJECT: CURRENT AMERICAN OPINION 9
INFORM CONSULS

1. SUMMARY. THIS IS THE NINTH EDITION OF "CURRENT AMERICAN OPINION," (CAO) DESIGNED TO INFORM FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL OVERSEAS ABOUT CURRENT AMERICAN ATTITUDES THAT CAN AFFECT NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGISLATION.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 077905

IT IS INTENDED PARTICULARLY FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS.

2. WE APPRECIATE AND FIND HELPFUL THE COMMENTS FROM TEL AVIV, DELHI, TOKYO, BONN, LUSAKA, THE HAGUE AND KIGALI. WE URGE OTHER POSTS TO OFFER THEIR VIEWS ON CONTENT AND UTILITY.

3. IN THIS ISSUE:

-- AMERICANS SEE FOREIGN ENERGY IMPORTS AS THE PRIME REASON FOR THE DOLLAR'S DECLINE OVERSEAS AND VIEW ENERGY AS THE NATION'S SECOND MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM, AFTER INFLATION. BUT THEY DO NOT PERCEIVE ENERGY PROBLEMS TO BE SO SERIOUS OR SO REAL AS THE ADMINISTRATION DOES AND REMAIN UNCONVINCED THAT CONSERVATION IS AS VITAL AS NEW ENERGY RESOURCES.

-- WHEN IT COMES TO INFLUENCING LAWMAKERS, THE PUBLIC SEES ITSELF AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST, JUST BEHIND THE PRESIDENT. AMERICANS ALSO VIEW "BIG GOVERNMENT" AS SECOND ONLY TO COMMUNISM IN ITS POTENTIAL TO THREATEN NATIONAL LIFE.

-- ALTHOUGH DOMESTIC CONCERNS PREVAIL, AMERICANS ARE PAYING ATTENTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION: ANWAR SADAT'S PUBLIC APPEAL, TOGETHER WITH A PERCEPTION OF ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE, HAS LESSENED SYMPATHY FOR ISRAEL. REGARDLESS OF THIS, AMERICANS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AN EVEN-HANDED APPROACH TO ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES. END SUMMARY.

4. DEVALUATION OF THE DOLLAR ABROAD CONCERNS SEVEN OF UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 077905

TEN AMERICANS, ACCORDING TO A MID-MARCH HARRIS POLL.

5. HARRIS RESPONDENTS SAW FOREIGN ENERGY IMPORTS AS THE PRIME REASON FOR THE DOLLAR'S DECLINE, FOLLOWED BY PURCHASE OF MORE FOREIGN-MADE THAN AMERICAN GOODS, FAILURE TO CONVINCE PEOPLE OVERSEAS THAT "WE ARE GOING TO TAKE TOUGH MEASURES ON ENERGY," AND FAILURE TO CONVINCE THOSE OVERSEAS THAT "WE HAVE INFLATION UNDER CONTROL."

6. DESPITE THE VIEW THAT ENERGY IMPORTS ARE A DRAIN ON THE DOLLAR AND AN IMPORTANT DOMESTIC CONCERN, AMERICANS ARE UNCONVINCED THAT ENERGY IS AS SERIOUS OR AS REAL A PROBLEM AS THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES IT TO BE. IN HIS LATEST POLL ON THE ISSUE, LATE LAST NOVEMBER, GALLUP FOUND THOSE VIEWING THE ENERGY SHORTAGE AS "VERY SERIOUS" HAD DECLINED TO THE SAME LEVEL HE FOUND JUST PRIOR TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S FIRST TELEVISED ENERGY ADDRESS LAST APRIL: 40 PERCENT, DOWN FROM 54 PERCENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TELECAST.

7. MOREOVER, ROPER FOUND A PLURALITY OF AMERICANS ONCE AGAIN HOLD THE VIEW THAT THE OIL SHORTAGE "WAS CONTRIVED FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REASONS": 39 PERCENT VS. THE 33 PERCENT WHO BELIEVE THE SHORTAGE IS REAL AND WORSENING. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE APRIL ENERGY MESSAGE, THE REVERSE WAS TRUE: 40 PERCENT

BELIEVED THE SHORTAGE WAS REAL AND 33 PERCENT SAW IT AS CONTRIVED.

8. THE PUBLIC ALSO REMAINS UNCONVINCED THAT ENERGY CONSERVATION IS AS VITAL AS CREATION OF NEW ENERGY RESOURCES.

9. AT THE START OF THE 1978 CONGRESSIONAL SESSION, HARRIS PRESENTED RESPONDENTS WITH A LIST OF 27 LEGIS- UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 077905

LATIVE GOALS AND ASKED THEM TO ASSESS THE DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE FOR EACH.

10. TRYING TO "REDUCE U.S. DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL" RANKED THIRD (83 PERCENT SAID THIS WAS "VERY IMPORTANT"). RANKING SIXTH WAS PROVIDING "INCENTIVES FOR MORE ENERGY PRODUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES" (77 PERCENT). FAR DOWN THE LINE, IN 21ST PLACE, WAS LEGISLATION TO "MAKE PEOPLE USE LESS ENERGY" (56 PERCENT). THE HARRIS MATERIAL CONFIRMS EARLIER DATA THAT AMERICANS, CONSISTENTLY, HAVE PLACED A HIGHER PRIORITY ON NEW ENERGY RESOURCES THAN ON ENERGY CONSERVATION.

11. ENERGY TOOK SECOND PLACE TO INFLATION AS THE "MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM FACING THE NATION TODAY," IN A MID-MARCH GALLUP POLL. EXACTLY ONE-THIRD OF THE PUBLIC CITED INFLATION AS THE NATION'S SINGLE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM; 23 PERCENT NAMED ENERGY; 17 PERCENT SAID UNEMPLOYMENT.

12. WHEN GALLUP LAST ASKED THIS QUESTION, LATE LAST YEAR, UNEMPLOYMENT WAS THE SECOND-RANKING NATIONAL CONCERN (24 PERCENT VS. 18 PERCENT FOR ENERGY). THIS SHIFT LIKELY REFLECTS LESSENED PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT AS WELL AS SOME INCREASE IN CONCERN ABOUT ENERGY OVER THE WINTER MONTHS. THE LATEST FINDING SUPPORTING THE DECLINE IN RELATIVE PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT COMES FROM A HARRIS SURVEY TAKEN EARLY THIS MONTH. HE FOUND AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF AMERICANS FELT PERSONALLY MORE BESET BY INFLATION THAN BY UNEMPLOYMENT (82 VS. 10 PERCENT IN CONTRAST TO THE 68 VS. 28 PERCENT CADDELL UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 077905

FOUND LAST AUTUMN).

13. WHEN IT COMES TO INFLUENCING DECISIONS OF LAW-MAKERS, AMERICANS BELIEVE THE PUBLIC IS AT THE BOT-

TOM OF THE LIST, JUST BEHIND THE PRESIDENT.

14. IN HIS LATEST POLL, ROPER SHOWED RESPONDENTS A LIST OF FACTORS THAT MIGHT INFLUENCE CONGRESS IN DECIDING LEGISLATION AND ASKED THEM TO SELECT THE TWO OR THREE THEY THOUGHT MOST IMPORTANT. IN ORDER OF PRIORITY, RESPONDENTS SELECTED: WHAT POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS WANT (48 PERCENT); WHAT LOBBYISTS FOR BUSINESS AND LABOR PERSUADE CONGRESS TO DO (40 AND 39 PERCENT, RESPECTIVELY); WHAT CONGRESS THINKS IS BEST

FOR THE COUNTRY (37 PERCENT); WHAT THE PRESIDENT WANTS (21 PERCENT); AND WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS (20 PERCENT).

15. IN THE SAME POLL, ROPER ASKED WHAT AMERICANS CONSIDER WILL BE THE "THREATS TO OUR SOCIETY AND TO LIFE AS WE KNOW IT" DURING THE NEXT GENERATION. COMMUNISM WAS NAMED THE GREATEST THREAT (46 PERCENT, DOWN FOUR POINTS FROM 1974).

16. "BIG GOVERNMENT" WAS CONSIDERED THE SECOND GREATEST THREAT (35 PERCENT, DOWN NINE POINTS FROM 1974). AMERICANS WERE ALSO LESS CONCERNED THAN IN 1974 ABOUT THE THREAT OF "BIG BUSINESS" (32 PERCENT, DOWN 12 POINTS) AND "BIG LABOR" (29 PERCENT, DOWN FOUR POINTS). BUT THEY WERE MORE CONCERNED THAN IN 1974 ABOUT THE THREAT OF "WOMEN'S LIBERATION" (14 PERCENT, UP FIVE POINTS) AND HOMOSEXUALITY (17 PERCENT, UP FOUR POINTS).

17. FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS RANKED FOURTH IN THE LATEST GALLUP SURVEY OF AMERICANS' CHIEF CONCERNS.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 077905

NINE PERCENT OF THE PUBLIC CITED THEM AS THE PRIMARY NATIONAL ISSUE. IN SPITE OF THE GREAT PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES, ONLY TWO PERCENT OF GALLUP'S RESPONDENTS CITED THAT ISSUE AS THE NATION'S PRIMARY CONCERN.

18. ALTHOUGH THEY PLACE PRIORITY ON DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, AMERICANS ARE PAYING ATTENTION TO A VARIETY OF FOREIGN POLICY TOPICS. ONE OF RELATIVELY HIGH INTEREST IS THE MIDDLE EAST.

19. ANWAR SADAT'S IMAGE AS THE LEADING MIDDLE EAST PEACEMAKER -- TOGETHER WITH A PUBLIC PERCEPTION THAT ISRAEL HAS BEEN LESS FORTHCOMING IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS THAN EGYPT -- HAS PRODUCED A DECLINE IN SYMPATHY FOR ISRAEL. BUT IT HAS NOT REPEAT NOT TRANSLATED INTO APPRECIABLY GREATER SYMPATHY FOR THE ARAB NATIONS AS A WHOLE.

20. RECENT POLLS SHOW PRO-ISRAEL SYMPATHY CONTINUES TO PREVAIL OVER SYMPATHY FOR ARAB NATIONS, BUT BY A REDUCED MARGIN (33 VS. 14 PERCENT IN FEBRUARY COMPARED TO 46 VS. 11 PERCENT LAST OCTOBER, ACCORDING TO GALLUP).

21. REGARDLESS OF WHERE PUBLIC SYMPATHY LIES, AMERICANS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AN EVEN-HANDED APPROACH TO ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES.

22. THE PREDOMINANT VIEW IS THAT NEITHER ISRAEL NOR EGYPT SHOULD BE SUBJECTED TO U.S. PRESSURE TO CONCLUDE A SETTLEMENT (62 PERCENT, ACCORDING TO NBC). ABOUT THREE-FIFTHS OF THE PUBLIC ALSO REJECTS THE PROPOSED UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 077905

SALES OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO ALL THREE MIDDLE EAST PARTIES: EGYPT, ISRAEL, OR SAUDI ARABIA.

23. SENTIMENT FOR A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT IN WHICH ISRAEL TRADES TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS FOR SECURITY GUARANTEES IS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH (61 PERCENT VS. 57 PERCENT LAST JUNE AND 52 PERCENT JUST AFTER THE 1973 WAR). EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO ARE PRO-ISRAEL OR PRO-ARAB IN SYMPATHY, THE LARGE MAJORITY SUPPORTS A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT RATHER THAN ONE IN WHICH THE FAVORED SIDE GAINS ALL CAPTURED TERRITORY.

24. ALTHOUGH THE DISPOSITION OF THE WEST BANK HAS BEEN IN THE NEWS FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD, ONLY 54 PERCENT OF THOSE GALLUP RECENTLY POLLED CLAIMED FAMILIARITY WITH THE ISSUE. THESE RESPONDENTS WERE FAIRLY EVENLY DIVIDED AMONG THOSE SUPPORTING AN INDEPENDENT STATE, THOSE SUPPORTING AN ENTITY LINKED WITH JORDAN, THOSE SUPPORTING THE STATUS QUO, AND THOSE WITH NO OPINION ON THE SUBJECT.

25. EARLIER POLLS HAVE SHOWN A MAJORITY OF AMERICANS ARE SYMPATHETIC TOWARD SOME KIND OF "HOMELAND" FOR THE PALESTINIANS. BUT THE PUBLIC CLEARLY TAKES A NEGATIVE VIEW OF THE PLO, SEEING THE ORGANIZATION AS UNWILLING TO MAKE PEACE AND NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN OPINION. THIS SUGGESTS THAT AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD A PALESTINIAN ENTITY WILL BE INFLUENCED NEGATIVELY TO THE EXTENT THE PLO IS SEEN TO SPEAK FOR THE PALESTINIANS. VANCE

NOTE BY OC/T: POUCHED KIGALI & TOKYO

UNCLASSIFIED

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC ATTITUDES, PUBLICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE077905
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PA/M:JACOLLINGE:REB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780132-0301
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803126/baaafcey.tel
Line Count: 271
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 486d5ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3167023
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 970812
Subject: CURRENT AMERICAN OPINION 9 INFORM CONSULS 1. SUMMARY. THIS IS THE NINTH EDITION OF "CURRENT AMERICAN OPINION," (CAO) DESIGNED TO INFORM FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL OVERSEAS ABOUT CURRENT AMERICAN ATTITUDES THAT CAN AFFECT NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGISLATION.
TAGS: SOPN, US, SOPN
To: ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS USIA MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/486d5ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

